

THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously amended): A method of verifying the authenticity of a signature on a collectible object comprising the following steps:
 - a. connecting an originating computer via an online communication system to a central computer,
 - b. providing information from the originating computer to the central computer about the user and the signer and selecting the type of collectible surface on which the suspected signature is inscribed,
 - c. scanning the suspected signature at the originating computer and transmitting the scanned image to the central computer,
 - d. comparing the scanned image of the suspected signature with a selected set of stored signatures at the central computer wherein at least one of said selected set is a signature made by said signer at a different instant from the suspected signature to determine whether the suspected signature is authentic or not authentic, and
 - e. communicating to the originating computer whether the signature is authentic or not authentic.
2. (Original): A method of verifying the authenticity of a signature on a collectible object according to claim 1 further comprising the following steps for those signatures that are determined to be authentic:
 - f. printing a certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram and printing a second identical hologram for those signatures that are authentic, and
 - g. attaching the second hologram to the collectible.
3. (Previously amended): A method of verifying the authenticity of a signature on a collectible object comprising the following steps:
 - a. scanning a suspected signature that is inscribed on a collectible with a scanner and transferring the scanned image into an originating computer,
 - b. connecting the originating computer via an online communication system to a central computer,
 - c. providing information from the originating computer to the central computer about the user and the signer and selecting the type of collectible surface on which the suspected signature is inscribed,
 - d. transmitting the scanned image from the originating computer to the central computer,
 - e. comparing the scanned image of the suspected signature with a selected set of stored reference signatures at the central computer wherein at least one of said selected set is a signature made at a different instant than said suspected signature by said signer to determine whether the suspected signature is authentic or not authentic, and

- f. communicating to the originating computer whether the suspected signature is authentic or not authentic.
4. (Original): A method of verifying the authenticity of a suspected signature on a collectible object according to claim 3 further comprising the following steps for those suspected signatures that are determined to be authentic:
- g. printing a certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram and printing a second identical hologram for those suspected signatures that are authentic, and
 - h. attaching the second hologram to the collectible.
5. (Previously amended): A method of verifying the authenticity of a suspected signature on a collectible object according to claim 3 further wherein information that is submitted to and/or generated by said central computer is stored in the central computer for retrieval at a future time.
6. (Previously presented): A method of verifying the authenticity of a suspected signature on a collectible object according to claim 4 further wherein information regarding said certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram and said second identical serialized hologram for permanently attaching to the object that bears the authentic signature is stored in the central computer for retrieval at a future time.
7. (Previously amended): A method of verifying the authenticity of a signature on a collectible object comprising:
- connecting to a central computer;
 - providing information about a signer;
 - transmitting an image of a suspected signature to said central computer;
 - selecting a type of collectible surface on which said suspected signature is inscribed;
 - comparing said scanned image with a selected set of stored signatures at least one of said selected set signed at a different instant by said signer at said central computer to determine whether the suspected signature is authentic or not authentic; and
 - communicating whether the signature is authentic or not authentic.
8. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:
- scanning the suspected signature.
9. (Previously amended): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

wherein said central computer has a number of different reference signatures stored in memory for each signer;

matching a set of reference signatures for said signer that most closely match the configuration of the object.

10. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

matching said suspected signature to one or more reference signatures that are from similarly curved or spherical objects or irregularly shaped collectible objects.

11. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

storing submitted and generated information in said central computer for retrieval at a future time.

12. (Previously presented): A method of verifying the authenticity of a suspected signature on a

collectible object according to claim 4 further wherein information regarding said certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram and said second identical serialized hologram for permanently attaching to the object that bears the authentic signature is stored in the central computer for retrieval at a future time.

13. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

for a signature determined to be authentic:

printing a certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram;

printing a second identical hologram; and

attaching the second hologram to the collectible.

14. (Previously presented): The method of claim 13 further comprising:

storing information regarding said certificate of authenticity bearing a serialized hologram and said second identical serialized hologram in said central computer for retrieval at a future time.

15. Cancelled

16. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

wherein said suspected signature is compared with a set of authentic reference stored signatures

selection of which is based on the user's input as to the shape of the object on which the suspected signature is inscribed.

17. (Previously presented): The method of claim 7 further comprising:

wherein said suspected signature is compared with a set of authentic stored reference signatures, selection of which is based on the user's input as to the signer of the object.

18. (Previously amended): A method of verifying the authenticity of a signature on a collectible object comprising:

- connecting to a central computer;
- providing information about a signer;
- transmitting an image of a suspected signature to said central computer;
- transmitting a type of collectible surface on which said suspected signature is inscribed;
- comparing said scanned image with a selected set of stored signatures at said central computer, at least one stored signature having been signed at a different instant from said suspected signature to verify or authenticate signatures of celebrities; artists; or athletes that have been scribed onto flat or curved or spherical or irregularly shaped collectible objects.

19. (Previously amended): A verification system allowing a user to authenticate a suspected signature on a collectible object comprising:

- an input device able to scan the suspected signature into an information system;
- a transmission device able to transmitting a scanned suspected signature via the Internet to a central computer;
- wherein said central computer is able to compare the suspected signature with a set of authentic reference signatures at least one signature having been signed at a different instant from said suspected signature to verify a signature on a collectible, the selection of said set based on information provided by the purchaser; and
- a certificate of authenticity for a collectible with a signature that has been verified.

20. (Previously presented): The system of claim 19 further comprising:
storage at said central computer storing all information for reference at a future time.

21. (Previously presented): The system of claim 19 further wherein:
said system allows authenticating a signature on a collectible quickly without having to transport the collectible.

22. (Previously presented): The system of claim 19 further wherein:
said central computer is provided with software that compares the suspected signature with a set of authentic reference signatures stored in the central computer.

23. (Previously presented): The system of claim 19 further wherein:
the collectible may be either a flat object; such as a photograph or painting; or a curved or spherical or an irregular shaped object; such as a baseball; basketball; or football;
the collectible is inscribed with a signature of a celebrity; artist; athlete or other famous person.
24. (Previously amended): The system of claim 19 further wherein:
said input device is connected to an originating computer, wherein said originating computer may be a user's personal computer at home or at work or said originating computer may be located at a third part location.
25. (Previously amended): The system of claim 24 further wherein:
said third party location is an authorized agent's place of business and an owner of the collectible will bring the collectible to the agent's place of business for authentication.
26. (Previously presented): A verification system allowing a user to authenticate a suspected signature on a collectible object comprising:
an input device able to receive information regarding a signature and a collectible object from a user;
a transmission device able to transmit information regarding a signature and a collectible object via the Internet to a central computer;
a certificate of authenticity for a collectible with a signature that has been verified; and
storage at said central computer storing all information for reference at a future time.
wherein said system allows authenticating a suspected signature on a collectible by comparison with a set of reference signatures including at least one reference signature signed at a different instant from said suspected signature quickly without having to transport the collectible.
27. Cancelled
28. (Previously presented): The system of claim 26 further wherein:
an input device able to scan the suspected signature into an information system;
a transmission device able to transmitting a scanned suspected signature via the Internet to a central computer; and
said central computer is provided with software to compare the suspected signature with said set of authentic reference signatures stored in the central computer.
29. (Previously amended): A verification system allowing a user to authenticate a suspected signature on a collectible object comprising:

input means for scanning the suspected signature into a personal computer; a portable computer; a palm computer; etc., via either a desk top scanner; a hand held scanner; or a digital camera;

transmission means for transmitting the scanned suspected signature via the Internet to a central computer that is capable of comparing the suspected signature with a set of authentic reference signatures at least one signature having been signed at a different instant from said suspected signature, the selection of which set is based on information provided by the purchaser, and providing the purchaser with an immediate indication whether the suspected signature is authentic or not authentic;

means for generating a certificate of authenticity having a serialized hologram that is identical to a serialized hologram that is then permanently affixed to the collectible as proof of verification; and

means for storing all information at said central computer for reference at a future time.